

# Hispanic couples conference in Laurel seeks to strengthen marriage

LAUREL - Hoping to boost their marriage and family life, Christina Lopez and Luis Solis came to a day of reflection for parents at St. Mary of the Mills Parish in Laurel June 15.

Organized by the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington, the sold-out event attracted about 400 Hispanic Catholics interested in furthering their formation on God's plan on marriage and family and put it into practice at home - and for many of them, also in their ministries.

"We liked (the talks) because they focus on how we can raise our children better," said Solis, a father of three and parishioner of Christ the King Parish in Glen Burnie.

The speakers were EWTN Español's TV personality, José "Pepe" Alonso, host of the show "Nuestra Fe en Vivo," or "Our Faith Live"; and Father Angel Espinosa de los Monteros, a priest of the Legionaries of Christ and an international speaker widely known for sprinkling his talks with humor.

The speakers addressed several issues related to the current state of the family and marriage, including the influence of media and technology in children, moral relativism, and the effects of broken marriages in families and society.

"A priority right now for the church is to strengthen marriages and families. We're under attack and as I shared in the presentation, the troubles we're seeing in society and in the church are consequences of weak marriages and families," Alonso told the Review. "Dioceses and archdioceses must make it a priority to work with marriages and families," he added.

"I agree with everything that Pepe talked about, all this helps us to reflect on and to strengthen our relationship in our daily life," said Mario Geronimo.

He came with his wife seeking motivation and advice. They were not let down.

The conference is a joint effort of the Office of Hispanic Ministry of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and the Office of Family Life in the Archdiocese of Washington, to provide support and accompany Hispanic families.

“The aim is to give them a day where they can come together and reflect on their roles as the domestic church that they are,” said Lia Salinas, director of Hispanic Ministry at the Baltimore Archdiocese.

Vanessa Morales and her husband, recently-ordained Deacon José Morales, serve at Resurrection of the Lord Parish in Laurel. After mentoring couples for 17 years, they said parishes need to focus on providing support and formation beyond marriage preparation.

“We must follow up and accompany them (couples), we must be mentors,” Morales said.

The conference is one of the many ways that both archdioceses aim to strengthen their support for family life as one of the regional priorities identified during the Fifth National Encuentro process of Hispanic ministry.

“As a result of the consultation process of the Encuentro, this year and the years to come, we want to concentrate in those priority areas. One of them is family life, the other one is support for immigrant families and the other one is training youth and young adult leaders,” Salinas added.

*Para leer este artículo en español, clic **aquí**.*